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Policy Issues in Risk Assessment and Mitigation

Practicality, cost, efficiency

- Noise-producing activities will not stop
- Society and the balancing act – need to consider cost of not conducting the activity
- Focus on individuals or populations?
- Environmental assessments lack credibility in some regions/countries
- Coincidence of sound sources and mammals in areas where there may be gaps in oversight and regulation

Practicality, cost, efficiency – cont'd

- Information gaps, challenges and issues
 - species distribution and critical habitat
 - problems with extrapolation
- Defining acceptable risk – controversial
- Great difficulty in determining and defining biological significance
- Huge uncertainty surrounding the effectiveness of mitigation measures
 - Are we overly confident?

Minimizing adverse impacts

- Know more about the species present in the area of sound use
- Early consultations between sound producers and regulators to allow for project modifications when and where possible (e.g, reduce scope, avoid critical habitat etc.)
- Should sound producers go beyond the requirements of countries where they operate?
- Role for international entities and standards?

Mitigation differences by sound source

- Tailor mitigation for the sound source and species of concern
 - one size does not fit all
- Intentional versus unintentional sounds?
- Technological innovations (e.g., ship design, signal processing)

Transferability

- Techniques are transferable but application and enforcement will vary
- There is a need to articulate mitigation issues in very understandable terms
- Raise the need for mitigation measures in international fora
- Get early involvement of actors at the planning and scoping phases

